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maintained at a temperature which is above the melting point of the surface treatment agent and at least 120°C and wherein in the treatment atmosphere the concentration of the surface treatment agent and the residence time of the particulate material are such as to provide a chemisorbed coating of the surface treatment agent on at least 75% of the surface area of the particulate material and the amount of physisorbed or unreacted surface treatment agent contained on the particulate material immediately after leaving the treatment atmosphere is not greater than about 0.5% by weight based upon the dry weight of the particulate material,

wherein said particulate material is treated by wet processing and dried prior to any treatment with said surface treatment agent.

REMARKS

I. Status of the Claims

Following entry of the above amendment, claims 1-5 and 7-15 are pending in this application. While not acquiescing to the Examiner's rejections, to advance this case to issuance, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the subject matter of claim 6, which the Examiner has indicated recites allowable subject matter. Accordingly, all the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and continued examination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.


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Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account no. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: April 2, 2001

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Application No. 09/555,641
Attorney Docket No. 7982.0002-00

**Amended Claims With Markings to Show Changes Made
By Amendment of April 2, 2002**

1. (Amended) A method of treating a particulate material comprising particles of an alkaline earth metal carbonate which includes the step of exposing the particulate material to a treatment atmosphere containing a surface treatment agent comprising one or more fatty acids which reacts with and coats the particles of the particulate material, wherein the treatment atmosphere is substantially water free and maintained at a temperature which is above the melting point of the surface treatment agent and at least 120°C and wherein in the treatment atmosphere the concentration of the surface treatment agent and the residence time of the particulate material are such as to provide a chemisorbed coating of the surface treatment agent on at least 75% of the surface area of the particulate material and the amount of physisorbed or unreacted surface treatment agent contained on the particulate material immediately after leaving the treatment atmosphere is not greater than about 0.5% by weight based upon the dry weight of the particulate material,

wherein said particulate material is treated by wet processing and dried prior to any treatment with said surface treatment agent.

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